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ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF MARINE MAMMALS OF TEXAS

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Checklists are useful to facilitate the work of a variety of biologists, especially students, and other individuals concerned about environmental issues. This compilation includes the currently acceptable scientific and vernacular names of species of marine mammals known to occur or to have been reported from the waters of Texas. It should be noted that data on distribution are somewhat more complete for some taxa than for others, a reflection of the published record, as well as the difficulties inherent in the observation and identification of marine mammals. In addition, the systematics for many of these species is incomplete due to a lack of sufficient specimens to account for possible geographic variation.

In the development of this checklist, we relied on the information presented by Hall (1981), Schmidly (1981), Fritts et al. (1983), Davis and Schmidly (1994), and others. Scientific and common names used herein mostly are in general agreement with the nomenclature of marine mammals presented by Wozencraft (1993), Mead and Brownell (1993), Wilson (1993), Rice (1998), Wilson and Cole (2000), and Baker et al. (2003). We relied heavily on the information summarized by Davis and Schmidly (1994), Rice (1998), and Würsig et al. (2000) with regard to the presence and distribution of marine mammals in the waters of Texas. Also, see the work by Reeves and Stewart (2003).

In the following checklist, 3 orders, 8 families, and 19 genera are placed in conventional phylogenetic sequence. However, the 29 species are arranged al-

phabetically within each genus. The intent of this arrangement is to facilitate use of the checklist.

ORDER CARNIVORA--CARNIVORES

Family Phocidae

(Hair Seals)

Monachus tropicalis (West Indian monk seal).— Reported from Texas based on remains in archeological sites and early sightings along the coast. However, specimens from archeological sites probably were traded from elsewhere (Raun 1964), and the alleged sight records from Texas are not credible (Rice 1998). This species is extinct.

ORDER CETACEA--WHALES

Family Balaenidae

(Right Whales)

Balaena glacialis (right whale).— Known from a single young individual that stranded in 1972 near Freeport, Brazoria County (Davis and Schmidly 1994). We follow Rice (1998) in recognizing only one species of right whale with the northern subspecies, *B. g. glacialis*, occurring as a vagrant in the Gulf of Mexico.

Family Balaenopteridae

(Rorquals)

Balaenoptera acutorostrata (northern minke whale).— Reported from a single stranding in 1988 on Matagorda Peninsula (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

The eastern Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean are part of the winter range of this species (Würsig et al. 2000). Populations of this species in the Atlantic are designated as the subspecies *B. a. acutorostrata* (Rice 1998).

Balaenoptera brydei (Bryde's whale).— Not recorded from Texas, but beached animals have been found on the coast of southwestern Louisiana (Davis and Schmidly 1994). Bryde's whale is the most commonly observed baleen whale in the Gulf of Mexico with 12 strandings recorded from southwestern Louisiana to southern Florida (Würsig et al. 2000). We follow Dizon et al. (1998) in recognizing this species as separate from *B. edeni*.

Balaenoptera musculus (blue whale).— Reported from a single stranding on the Texas coast in 1940; however, the identification of the animal is highly questionable (Davis and Schmidly 1994). The occurrence of this species in the Gulf of Mexico is probably accidental (Würsig et al. 2000). We follow Rice (1998) in assigning individuals found in the Gulf of Mexico to the subspecies *B. m. musculus*.

Balaenoptera physalus (fin whale).— A beached animal was found at Gilchrest, Chambers County, in 1951 (Davis and Schmidly 1994). The occurrence of this species in the Gulf of Mexico is probably accidental (Würsig et al. 2000). Individuals found in the Gulf of Mexico should be assigned to the subspecies *B. p. physalus* (Rice 1998).

Megaptera novaeangliae (humpback whale).— Known from Texas on the basis of a single sighting near Galveston in 1922 (Davis and Schmidly 1994). Humpback whales of the North Atlantic migrate to wintering areas in the Caribbean and parts of the Gulf of Mexico (Rice 1998).

Family Delphinidae (Delphinids)

Steno bredanensis (rough-toothed dolphin).— Documented from Texas on the basis of two strandings near Galveston (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Tursiops truncatus (bottle-nosed dolphin).— Reportedly the most common cetacean in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Texas coast (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Stenella attenuata (pantropical spotted dolphin).— Animals have been found stranded on Padre Island and near Port Aransas in Texas (Davis and Schmidly 1994). This species is commonly found in deep water (Würsig et al. 2000).

Stenella clymene (Clymene dolphin).— Known in Texas from a total of four strandings on Padre and Mustang islands (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Stenella coeruleoalba (striped dolphin).— Reported from strandings on Texas beaches and from sightings along the coast (Davis and Schmidly 1994). This species is usually found in water with a depth of greater than 200 meters (Würsig et al. 2000).

Stenella frontalis (Atlantic spotted dolphin).— Based on reported sightings, one of the more common dolphins in the Gulf of Mexico (Davis and Schmidly 1994). This species is usually found in shallow water (Würsig et al. 2000).

Stenella longirostris (spinner dolphin).— Reported in Texas from strandings along Padre Island National Seashore (Davis and Schmidly 1994). The subspecies in the Gulf of Mexico is *S. l. longirostris* (Perrin 1998).

Delphinus delphis (short-beaked saddleback dolphin).— Reported from Texas based on a single animal found stranded at Galveston (Davis and Schmidly 1994). However, according to Jefferson (1997), all reports of specimens and sightings of *Delphinus* sp. from the Gulf of Mexico are erroneous or unacceptable.

Grampus griseus (Risso's dolphin).— Known from a single stranding on the Texas coast, as well as from sightings at sea off the south Texas coast (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Peponocephala electra (melon-headed whale).— Recorded in Texas based on three stranding records. In 1990 a male stranded on Matagorda Peninsula (Davis and Schmidly 1994) and in 1998 a female and a juvenile stranded near Corpus Christi (Würsig et al. 2000).

Feresa attenuata (pygmy killer whale).— Three strandings reported from the Texas coast as well as

sightings at sea off the south Texas coast (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Pseudorca crassidens (false killer whale).—Known in Texas from two strandings on the upper coast (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Globicephala macrorhynchus (short-finned pilot whale).—Reportedly common in the Gulf of Mexico, with strandings and sightings recorded from along the Texas coast (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Orcinus orca (killer whale).—Known from Texas on the basis of a single stranding on Padre island and a sighting in waters off Port Aransas (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Family Ziphiidae (Beaked Whales)

Mesoplodon densirostris (Blainville's beaked whale).—Reported from Texas on the basis of a single stranding in 1980 on Padre Island (Davis and Schmidly 1994).

Mesoplodon europaeus (Gervais' beaked whale).—Known from five strandings on the Texas coast. This species is thought to be the most common ziphiid in the Gulf of Mexico (Würsig et al. 2000).

Ziphius cavirostris (Cuvier's beaked whale).—Not recorded from Texas, but 18 strandings have been reported from the eastern Gulf of Mexico. This species is usually found in water with depths of greater than 2000 meters (Würsig et al. 2000).

Family Kogiidae (Pygmy Sperm Whales)

Kogia breviceps (pygmy sperm whale).—Known from six strandings on the Texas coast (Würsig et al. 2000). Prefers waters mostly beyond the edge of the continental shelf (Rice 1998).

Kogia sima (dwarf sperm whale).—Known from two strandings on the Texas coast (Würsig et al. 2000). This species is probably uncommon in the western portion of the Gulf (Davis and Schmidly 1994; Rice 1998).

Family Physeteridae (Sperm Whales)

Physeter macrocephalus (sperm whale).—Known from the stranding of "Odie" near Sabine Pass in 1989 (Würsig et al. 2000). Sperm whales may be the most common of the great whales in the Gulf of Mexico (Davis and Schmidly 1994). Most (71%) of the sightings of this species in the Gulf have been reported from near the Texas coast (Würsig et al. 2000).

ORDER SIRENIA--SEA COWS

Family Trichechidae (Manatees)

Trichechus manatus (West Indian manatee).—Reported from Laguna Madre during the 1900s, near Bayside in 1928, and near Sabine Lake on the Texas-Louisiana border in 1937 (Würsig et al. 2000). We follow Rice (1998) in recognizing the records along the Texas coast as vagrants of the subspecies *T. m. manatus* from the southern Gulf of Mexico.

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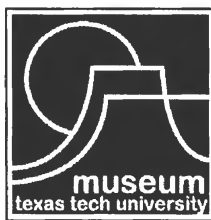
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